

Helsington Parish Council Complaints Procedure

The procedure is for use when a complaint is made by an individual or body against the administration of the council or its procedures. It is not intended for this procedure to be used for complaints against an employee or a councillor where separate legislation and procedures of the council exist. It is also not intended that the procedure be used for any complaint that can be resolved informally.

Should a formal complaint be received that the council has acted improperly; a committee will be convened and will act in accordance with Standing Orders. The committee will report its findings to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

It should be noted that where the clerk is putting the view of the council he/she should not advise the committee.

Receipt of Complaint

1. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk, he or she should be advised to address it to the chairman of the council.
3. The clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by the Complaints Committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative/friend if they wish.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

At the Meeting

6. The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public in accordance with Standing Orders
7. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
8. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint.
9. Members may ask any question of the complainant.
10. The clerk will explain the council's position
11. Members may ask any question of the clerk.
12. The clerk is offered the opportunity to summarise his/her position.
13. The complainant is offered the opportunity to summarise his/her position.
14. The clerk and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.
15. The clerk and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the Meeting

16. The clerk will confirm the decision of the committee to the next meeting of the Parish Council.
17. The clerk will, after the Parish Council meeting, confirm the decision in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.